

Changing Fate by Theamazingannie

Series: [As Long As We're Together \[2\]](#)

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Summary:

Beverly saw the future twenty-seven years ago in the deadlights, but that was only one potential future. Richie changed fate once. He can do it again. No one has to die.

1. Thanks For Showing Up, Stan

Author's Note:

If you haven't read part 1 of this series yet, I recommend you do so. There will be some references to the events that take place. I'm mainly focusing on rewriting the parts that led to the deaths, so most things are exactly the same, with the exception of Stan being there. I almost wanted to rewrite the entire script, but that would take too much time, and I just want to get to the happy ending. I hope you enjoy!

Summary for the Chapter:

All seven of the losers reunite at the Jade Orient twenty-seven years later.

Memories were slowly trickling back to Richie as he drove through the streets of his childhood home. It was a strange feeling realizing all the things he had completely forgotten about this place. When Mike had called him, he hadn't known who he was; now, he couldn't imagine not knowing. How had he gone all these years not thinking about his closest friends, the only real friends he'd ever really had? He didn't understand it, but he was here now. He was about to see them all after all these years. It wasn't often he got nervous; he spent a good portion of his life performing in front of thousands of people. But now, now that he was going to see these people after all this time, he found his heart beating really fast and he felt dizzy. He had to clutch his hands to his steering wheel to keep them from shaking. He wondered many times during his drive from the airport if maybe he should have gotten a driver because it probably wasn't safe for him to be on the road. But the restaurant was just around the corner. He was almost there. He was about to see them again. Oh boy.

He parked in the lot, taking a few moments to collect himself. This wasn't just the first time he was going to see his friends in over twenty years; this was also the first time they were going to see him.

He glanced at himself in the mirror and groaned, adjusting his hair in the rearview mirror. He hadn't cared about his appearance in years. What was different now?

He took one last deep breath and exited his car. As he neared the restaurant, he saw two figures that were unfamiliar at first, but at closer inspection were as familiar as his own reflection.

"Wow," he said when he approached the two figures hugging. "You two look amazing. What the fuck happened to me?"

The two smiled at him and they greeted each other excitedly. Even though he had known these people and felt such strong emotions towards them, there was still that awkwardness from having not spoken in so long.

"Shall we head inside?" Ben asked after a few moments.

Richie felt his heart skip a beat, though he didn't know why. They made their way inside and were led to a back area that Mike had reserved for them. Three figures already stood inside, facing away from the entrance, and Richie's memory must have been coming back to him because he recognized them instantly. Mike, sweet and strong, the only member of their group to stay in Derry all these years. Bill, their leader, and Richie's childhood best friend. And Eddie...Eddie...Eddie. Richie suddenly felt that dizziness from before, only twice as strong. All of the feelings he had seemingly forgotten all came flooding back. He remembered the hammock, the fanny pack, the too-short shorts that had kept Richie laying awake at night. The boy who Richie had loved more than he knew how to process, the secret he had kept inside for so long, even long after he had left the close-minded town of Derry. It was almost too much for Richie to bear, too many memories coming back at once. He suddenly had the urge to do something outrageously stupid and obnoxious and, well, it was right there.

The three men turned at the loud sound of the gong Richie had just banged. "This meeting of the Losers Club has officially begun," he announced.

"Look at these guys," Eddie said. The six of them stood there staring

at each other for the longest time. It was really starting to make Richie deeply uncomfortable.

"Alright," he said. "I need to get a drink in me as soon as possible. Who's with me?"

The other losers murmured their agreements and took their seats, Richie going last. There were two seats available: one next to Bev, and one next to Eddie. He wanted to sit next to Eddie more than he should, so he elected to take the seat next to Bev. There would be time to sort out this sudden incoming of feelings later. Right now, he needed to get absolutely plastered.

Once the waitress left with their drink orders, one last figure entered the room. "Wow, guys, you started without me?"

Mike perked up. "Stan! I was starting to worry you weren't coming!"

"I almost didn't," Stan admitted. He smiled at Richie. "But then I remembered some wise words from a good friend. Losers gotta stick together, right?"

Richie vaguely remembered saying something like that, remembered sitting on the floor of a bathroom with a crying Stan, and then in his living room a short time later. He couldn't remember why Stan had been crying, only that he had to do something to stop it. Still, he was glad to see his old friend, and for the Losers Club to be officially all there together. "Come! Sit down! We ordered you a drink."

Stan eyed the seat between Eddie and Richie, frowning. "Uh-uh. No way am I sitting in between you two assholes."

"What does that mean?" Richie asked.

"You know what it means, Trashmouth. Not enough alcohol in the world could make me sit there."

"Come on, Stanley," Bill said. "We can play musical chairs later. We want to know how you've been!"

Stan squinted his eyes, but Richie knew it was no use. Every one of them had a hard time saying "no" to Bill. It was the reason they were

all friends in the first place, though Richie realized then he couldn't remember exactly how they had all come together. It was such a long time ago. Stan sighed and joined them at the table. "Fine, but the moment you two start fighting, I'm out of here. I already had to cancel plans with my wife to come."

"Holy shit, Stan. You actually found someone to put up with you?"

Stan smacked Richie, but he had a smile on his face. "Yeah. Patty. She's great. I think you guys would really like her. Are any of you married?"

Richie noticed Bev wince and wanted to ask her about it, but the waitress came in with their drinks, laying a shot in front of each of them, as well as a few more drinks. (Hey, it was a party.) Too much was happening right now and it didn't seem like the right time. "I married this actress, Audra," Bill said. "Although I'm not sure how much longer it's going last. We've been having problems lately, and taking a trip all the way across the country probably didn't help." He picked up his shot and shrugged. "Cheers."

They raised their glasses together. "Yeah, I have a wife, too," Eddie said as they took their drinks.

Richie, who had taken his shot entirely with his mouth, dropped it on the table and almost laughed. "Wait, Eddie, you got married?"

"Yeah. Why's that so fucking funny, dickwad?"

"What, to like a woman?" Richie didn't really know why he had to badger Eddie like this. It was their thing, Richie attacking everything about Eddie's life, and Eddie inevitably getting pissed about it. Richie thrived on it.

"Fuck you, bro," Eddie said.

Richie chuckled. "Fuck you!" he shouted.

"Alright, Trashmouth. What about you?" Bill asked, trying to alleviate the tension.

Bev laughed. "There's no way Richie's married."

"No, I got married," Richie said, looking towards Eddie. "Did you not hear this?" Eddie shook his head. "You didn't know I got married?"

"No."

"Yeah, no. Me and your mom are very, very happy right now."

Bill spit out his drink as everyone except Eddie laughed. Even Stan allowed himself a decent chuckle. Richie himself laughed at the annoyed expression on Eddie's face. They were falling back into their old rhythms, and Richie was loving every minute of it. Maybe this reunion wouldn't be so bad after all. Maybe he could get through this dinner without letting slip the secret he had been hiding for so long. He couldn't let that happen. It would put a damper on the whole night.

Through dinner, they continued their updates on their lives as they grew increasingly less sober, Richie cracking jokes throughout. He particularly enjoyed trashing Eddie's line of work. Who could blame him? A *risk analyst*? Leave it to Eddie to find the most boring job in existence. He made Stan's accounting job look like an amusement park ride.

"I propose a toast to the Losers," Bev announced, and they all clinked glasses. She grabbed Richie's arm and pulled him close to her, and Richie legit thought she was going to kiss him until she shoved her chopsticks into his mouth. Everyone laughed and cheered, and Richie found himself glancing towards Eddie, who was laughing softly.

It was probably a bad thing for him to drink so much, but he knew he wouldn't have been able to make it through this night without any. Still, it made it harder to hide his feelings. At some point, he had convinced Stan to switch places with him and ended up in an arm-wrestling competition with Eddie. This is what he would do all the time as a child, finding any and all excuses to touch Eddie. The feeling of Eddie's hand in his sent tingles up his arm. When Eddie shouted, "Let's take our shirts off and kiss!" he knew it was only a joke, something to distract Richie so Eddie could win, but he wanted more than anything for it to be a real suggestion, for them to be alone in Richie's hotel room, for Eddie to feel the same way about him.

But none of that was going to happen. After winning the arm wrestle, Richie moved back to his previous seat, trying to ignore the way Stan was looking at him. They continued their bickering, but Richie felt safer with Stan between them. He knew he couldn't do anything stupid, anything he'd regret.

As the purpose of their visit was slowly revealed, Richie knew that he was stuck here for a little bit longer than just one night. That thought terrified him more than anything IT could have thrown at him. The longer he was here, the higher the chance that everything in his life would fall apart.

"I can't do this," Richie told Stan once they were back at the townhouse. "I can't be here. I need to leave." Everyone had said the same thing to Mike back at the restaurant, who had desperately to plead with them to stay. He could plead all he wanted; there was no way Richie was going through all that again.

"You have to," Stan said.

"Says who?"

"Says *you*. Twenty-seven years ago. You told me that if It ever came back, we would defeat him. Together. We can do it. I know we can."

"How?" Richie asked. "How could you possibly know that?"

"Because we already changed one fate." Stan looked into at him, a plea deep inside his eyes. "Twice. Don't you remember?"

He did. He couldn't believe he ever forgot the time he found Stanley in the bathroom, a razor blade in his hand, a look of hopelessness in his eyes. Then that same hopelessness a month later, when he saw the future, saw what would become of him. Yet here he was. The boy who was the most afraid out of all of them, standing here today because of Richie. How could he let fear control him when the boy who had so much of it and had overcome it stood right in front of him?

"What if something happens, and one of us dies?" Richie asked him.

He once again found his eyes wandering to where Eddie stood at the bottom of the staircase, his crazy amount of luggage at his feet.

"Nothing bad can happen when we're all together," Stan said, placing a hand on Richie's shoulder. "You taught me that. But if we aren't all together..."

Richie took a deep breath. He was going to regret this. "I'm in," he said, loud enough for the other Losers to hear.

"What?" Eddie exclaimed. "What happened to not wanting to get murdered?"

"Trust me. Being in Derry, especially when there is a killer clown on the loose, is the last thing I want. But if we aren't all here to defeat It together, then something bad is going to happen, and someone is going to get hurt." He glanced at Eddie again. "I couldn't live with myself if that happened."

"He's right," Bev said. She was clutching a glass of some kind of alcohol, and Richie could see her hand shaking. "We have to stick together. If not, we will all die horrible deaths. I've seen it happen."

"What do you mean?" Ben asked, a concerned look on his face.

"I've been having these...dreams. Or nightmares, more like. I've seen us all die." She looked up at Stan. "I saw you die. In the bathtub. Your wrists..."

Stan looked down. "I saw it, too. Twenty-seven years ago. When Mike called...I knew it was the moment before it happened. But I stopped myself. I remembered how much you all care about me, and how much you needed me to be here. So I came."

Richie smiled at him, grabbing his hand and giving it a squeeze. "Yeah. Thanks for showing up, Stan."

"Wait wait wait," Eddie said, stepping down from the staircase. "Why are you two seeing us all die? What makes you any different than us?"

"The deadlights," Mike said, stepping into the room.

Bill appeared from behind him. "The deadlights." He looked deep in thought. "She was the only one of us who got caught in the deadlights that day." He looked up at Stan. "Or so we thought. When the monster was sucking on your face..." He faded off.

Stan nodded. "That's why I was so scared."

"Oh, Stan, why didn't you tell any of us?" Bev asked.

"Why didn't *you* tell *us*?" Bill asked her.

"I didn't think it was real," Bev admitted. "But if I had known Stan had seen it, too."

"I was too scared," Stan said. He played with the sleeves over his wrists. "And I didn't want anyone to know that I was capable of that, that I'd almost tried it before. Richie was the only one who knew. I made him promise not to tell anyone. I didn't want you to think less of me."

"Stan..." Bev said.

"I wish you would have told us," Bill said. "We could have helped you."

"And we never would have thought less of you," Mike said. "We're the Losers Club. We support and accept each other no matter what."

"Yeah, we love you, Stan," Bev added. "I love all of you. That's what makes us different than It. We have each other. As long as we're together, nothing bad can happen."

"Alright," Eddie said, looking unhappy about everyone's sudden change in mood. "So how do we do this?"

They all instinctively looked at Bill, but it was Mike who spoke. "The Ritual of Chud."

Before they left to follow Mike on whatever crazy adventure he had planned to tell them how to defeat Pennywise, Richie pulled Bev

aside. He knew it was probably pointless to know, but he had to ask.

"How do we all die?"

"What?"

"Don't play dumb with me. You saw us all die. How does it happen?"

Bev took a shaky breath. "Do you really mean, how does Eddie die?"

Richie took a step back, his face paling. "I don't...why would you...that's not what I..."

"Richie," she interrupted. "In my vision...you were with him when he died. I saw how you reacted. I see the way you act with him now. You love him." She paused, looking at him intently. "Am I wrong?"

Richie didn't say anything. That's the second time one of his friends correctly guessed how he felt about Eddie. Who else knew?

Bev put her hand on his arm, a soft look on her face. There were tears in her eyes. "I'm only going to tell you because Stan telling you seemed to save him, and I want more than anything for us all to be safe. You two deserve to be happy." She took a deep breath. "I saw him kneeling over you, in this cavern, and he thought he had killed It, but he hadn't. This...this claw came out of nowhere and just went right through him and flung him across the cavern. It was awful and you...you refused to believe he was dead, you were so in denial, and that's when I realized what he really meant to you." She closed her eyes tightly as if to try to blink the memory out of existence. "I never want to see that happen."

Richie shook his head. "It won't. I won't let it. As long as we're together..."

Bev nodded. "As long as we're together," she agreed. "Let's do this."

Notes for the Chapter:

The next chapter will be the actual rewriting of the end of the movie, then the later chapter(s) will be what happens later. Let me know what you think so

far!

2. We're Free

Summary for the Chapter:

What ACTUALLY happened at the end of IT Chapter 2.

Notes for the Chapter:

I tried to keep a lot of the dialogue the same as the movie and just adjust it to fit in. Also, the actual killing of It is pretty rushed just because there was a lot of dialogue in that scene that I didn't want to have to transcribe. Plus, it was just a weird scene altogether. I just wanna kill the bitch and move the fuck on to the good stuff. I hope you enjoy!

Everything was out of focus. He could sort of hear what was going on around him, but he couldn't understand words or recognize shapes. He could sense someone kneeling over him, shouting his name, but it was like it was happening a mile away.

"Hey, Rich, wake up!" Richie blinked. Finally, the figure over him focused into Eddie. "Yeah, yeah! There he is, buddy! Hey, Richie, listen! I think I got him, man. I think I killed It!"

I saw him kneeling over you. He looked up at Eddie, very much kneeling over him. *He thought he had killed It.* No no no no. This couldn't be it. This wasn't happening. *But he hadn't.* Fuck no.

He realized by the look of confusion on Eddie's face that he had said the last part out loud, but that hardly mattered. He didn't even think, not that he had the time for it. He didn't even know when it was coming, but it was now or never. He grabbed Eddie and rolled out of the way, just in time for the very claw-like arm of Pennywise to come crashing down into the spot they had just been laying.

Richie, who was now on top of Eddie, was breathing heavily, staring

at the spot where Eddie was supposed to die. But here he was, breathing heavily, but breathing. "I did it," he whispered, astounded at the reality of it all. He had known this moment was coming, had known what he needed to do, but actually doing it was an entirely different story.

"Holy shit," Eddie said. His face was paler than Richie had ever seen it, his eyes wide. "You just saved my life."

Richie grinned. "Well, you saved mine. Nice going. We gotta go." He shot up, grabbing Eddie's arm and pulling him up with him. It wasn't done with them yet. The seven of them ran from the smashing claws of It until they found a tunnel leading down, too small for It to fit through. Once they were all together again, they fell against each other, trying to catch their breaths.

"You did it," Bev said softly, clutching her hands to her chest. "You saved him."

"He didn't die like in your vision, but he can still die," Richie said. "We all can. We're not safe until It's dead."

"So what do we do?" Ben asked. They looked at Mike, but he was clearly at a loss.

"I really thought it would work," he told them. "I'm so sorry, guys."

"There's no time for that now," Bill said. "We need to figure something out."

"I almost killed it," Eddie said. Everyone looked at him in confusion. He was knelt on the ground, breathing heavily. Richie had the immediate thought to get him his inhaler, but he had burned that in the ritual. "The leper," he continued. "My hands around his throat. And I could feel him choking. I made him small. He seemed so weak."

Mike was looking at him as if he cracked the answer to the universe. "The Shokopiwah. All living things must abide by the laws of the shape they inhabit."

Bev gasped in recognition. Richie still wasn't quite sure what they were talking about. "Guys!" Ben shouted. They all looked up to where

he was sticking his head out of a small tunnel. "There's a passageway. Through here."

"The tunnel!" Bev said. "Pennywise has to make himself small to get through the entrance of the cavern, right? Okay, so if we can get back there, we can force him down to size."

"Yeah," Bill agreed.

"We make him small. Small enough so we can kill him."

They all looked at each other in wonder. Was this it? Was this the final key to defeating Pennywise once and for all? Was there actually a chance that they could make it out of here alive?

Richie looked over at Eddie, who was looking up at him. Maybe once this was all over, he might actually tell Eddie how he felt. Who cared if he didn't feel the same way? The chance was almost too good to give up. He exchanged a look with Stan, who seemed to understand what was going through his mind. He nodded to him, and Stan nodded back. It was time to do this. They were getting out of this cave. They were going home.

The seven of them exited the cave, together, and were immediately stabbed at by Pennywise and his claws. They ran, realizing that they didn't exactly have a developed plan. How exactly were they supposed to make It small?

"So what do we do, Mike?" Ben asked.

"Well, there's more than one way to make someone small," Mike told them.

"Make him believe that he is," Bev finished.

"W-what?" Bill asked. He sounded just as incredulous as Richie felt.

"Make him believe that he is," Mike agreed.

"Oh?" It said. "Me? Small" He laughed. "I am the Eater of Worlds."

"Not to us you're not," Mike told him. He stared into It's eyes, not a

hint of fear on his face. "You're just a clown."

It was such a ridiculous and simple thing to say, but it seemed to anger It more than Richie thought it would. That was really how they were supposed to defeat the monster that had tormented them for twenty-seven years? By bullying it? Well, if it worked, it worked.

"You're just a fucking clown!" he yelled right along with everyone else as It grew smaller and smaller until he was the size of an infant. The Mike ripped his heart out and they all held it together and crushed it, and then it was over. They stood there, clutching each other and sighing with twenty-seven years' worth of relief.

"I thought you were afraid of clowns," Eddie whispered to him.

Richie smiled. "I'm not afraid of anything, not anymore." He took a deep breath. "Eddie, I-"

He was interrupted by the sound of the roof starting to collapse on top of them. "We have to go," Bev said.

Richie sighed. Twenty-seven years. He could wait a few more minutes. The seven of them, all together, all alive, hurried towards the place they had entered. They dodged falling stones and wood as they passed first through the cavern, then the sewers, then finally the house. Once they were safely outside the house on Niebolt Street, they stood in a line and watched it collapse. Richie expected to feel lighter, feel as if the world had been lifted off his shoulders. Instead he just felt...nothing? It was like it hadn't properly sunk in yet that it was over. Twenty-seven years ago, Pennywise had tormented them for an entire summer. This time, they had defeated him in two days. So much had happened in so little time that none of it felt real, like it was just some crazy dream and he would wake up and be back in Chicago.

"What now?" Eddie asked.

None of them spoke for a while. Everyone appeared to feel the exact way that Richie did. What exactly was the protocol for how to unwind after defeating a killer clown?

"Let's go to the quarry," Stan suggested. They all looked at him in surprise. He hadn't been a fan of the quarry when they were kids; maybe he *had* changed. He stepped out in front of them and turned around, smiling sadly at each of them. "One last time, before we go back to our separate lives."

"Separate lives?" Bev asked. "What do you mean 'separate lives'? I'm not saying goodbye to any of you. Not ever again."

"But what if we forget again?"

"We shouldn't," Mike told them. "You all losing your memories was tied to It's curse. Now that It's dead..."

"The curse is lifted," Bill finished. "We're free."

"We can still go to the quarry," Richie said. "For old time's sake. It'd be nice to remember one good thing about this shitty town."

"Quarry it is," Ben said, gesturing his arms for them to get going. Richie was grateful to Stan for the plan. As much as he hated this town, he wasn't ready to go just yet. He had to admit to himself that a small part of him was worried that Mike was wrong, that they would leave this town and forget each other all over again. He wanted to leave behind something to remember.

Bev jumped first, of course. Even after everything she'd been through, she was probably the bravest among all of them. She always had been. Bill jumped second, then Ben, then Mike. Stan hung back, looking at Richie with his eyebrows raised, but Richie nodded at Eddie and smiled. Stan understood, in the way he had always been able to understand Richie, and stepped to the edge of the cliff. Richie thought he wasn't going to jump, he had never liked the quarry as a kid, but then he did, and Richie was finally alone with Eddie.

Eddie went to step to the edge to jump as well, but Richie grabbed his arm to stop him. "Wait," he told him. "I need to talk to you about something, Eds."

"What is it, Rich?"

Richie fidgeted with his hands. He hadn't really thought out exactly

how he was going to say this. "I...*fuck*. This isn't easy to say, and it's probably not going to be easy to hear, so I guess I just need to get it out. I'm not asking anything from you, I just don't want to keep secrets anymore, and this one, in particular, has been eating at me for a long time, and I tried to move on when I left Derry, but the whole memory wipe thing kinda messed everything up so I never really got passed it and when I saw you again at the restaurant, it all came flooding back."

"What are you saying, Richie?" Eddie interrupted. He was looking at Richie with wide eyes and his mouth slightly open.

Richie took a deep breath. "I love you, Eddie. I have for...a really long time. Almost thirty years now. And it's fine that you don't feel the same way, you have a wife, but I needed to say that. I don't want to leave Derry again with any regrets. I just needed to tell you that."

Eddie stared at him for a really long time before putting his hands to his mouth and turning away. He started to speak several times but each time shut his mouth and returned his hands to cover it. Finally, he stopped in front of Richie. "Is this a prank? Are you joking? You don't really...No, you don't...you don't actually...you're not actually in love with me, right? This is just a joke, right? Cuz, if so, it's hilarious." He said "hilarious" in the same way he said it when Richie had insulted Eddie's mom earlier, dripping with sarcasm.

"Wait, what?" Richie had expected various reactions from Eddie when he decided to tell him how he felt, but straight-up denial was not one of them. He grabbed Eddie's hands. "Eddie, no. I'm completely serious. More serious than I've ever been in my entire life. I love you."

Eddie laughed nervously pulling his hands away to once again place them over his mouth. "But...you can't!"

"What the hell are you talking about?"

Eddie shook his finger at Richie. "You can't because that means that all this time I've been telling myself not to love you, that nothing would ever happen, that-" He shoved his whole face in this hands this time and screamed. "Nope. Nope nope nope. This is a dream, or a prank, or maybe we didn't kill It after all and he's just messing with

me-

"Woah woah woah. Back up. You-you love me?"

"Yes," Eddie said in a small voice. "*You love me?*"

Richie ran his fingers through his hair, letting out a light chuckle.
"Yeah."

"Huh," Eddie said.

"Huh," Richie agreed.

They stared at each other for a while longer, neither of them knowing how exactly to proceed. They only stopped when they heard shouting coming from the water below. Richie couldn't make out what they were saying, but he assumed they were wondering where the two of them were.

"We should...we should probably get going then," Eddie said. Richie nodded, his brain no longer capable of forming actual words. The two of them stood side by side on the edge of the cliff, staring down at their friends in the water below. "You ready?" Eddie asked. He reached over and grabbed Richie's hand. Richie glanced over at him in surprise, only to be met with a small smile.

Richie smiled back. "One," he started.

"Two."

"Three!" Together, they jumped from the cliff. Their hands separated when they hit the water, but as soon as their heads popped up, Eddie found him and dragged him back down. Richie assumed he was just playing around like they had when they were kids until Eddie's lips touched his and suddenly all of the emotions he had held inside all these years poured out.

He vaguely heard Bill's voice say, "Where'd they go?" and Stan's response of, "Give them a minute," but all that really mattered was that Eddie was there, alive and kissing him. The entire world faded away; the only thing that existed was the two of them.

Eventually, they had to come up for air, and when they did, they started laughing with more glee than Richie could ever remember feeling. He almost forgot that his friends were all there in the quarry, too.

"Nice of you to join us," Bev said with a smile. Richie looked over at the others, a feeling of fear settling in his stomach, but they were all smiling at him.

Stan looked like he just witnessed the birth of his child, his hand over his heart and a proud look on his face. "This might be the happiest day of my life," he said, wiping away a fake tear.

"What about the day you married Patty, Stanley?" Richie asked him.

Stan shrugged. "I can have two happiest days."

Richie rolled his eyes. "So are we going to just float around in this water, or should we maybe get Eddie some medical attention?"

Eddie's eyes widened, his hand lightly touching the bandage on his cheek. "Oh shit, you're right. This is probably already infected and it is never going to heal properly without stitches, if at all. I'm going to have a nasty scar for the rest of my life." He shivered.

"Hey, scars make you hotter," Richie said. "Just look at what it did to Ben."

Ben rolled his eyes as they laughed. Eddie glared at Richie. "Oh yeah? How do you feel about kissing someone with a hole in their face, asshole?"

"You actually have many holes in your face, one of which is quite crucial in the act of kissing, so..."

"Nothing really changes, does it?" Bill asked, rolling his eyes.

"He's right, though," Mike said. "We should probably get to a hospital, and get cleaned up. I don't know about you guys, but I'm really looking forward to finally being able to leave this town."

"We should get some rest first," Bev suggested. "We can get breakfast

together." She looked up at the sun shining brightly in the sky. "Or...dinner?"

Eddie sighed. "Our circadian rhythms are all jacked now."

"The fuck is a circadian rhythm?" Richie asked him. Eddie rolled his eyes. "Let's get you to a hospital before you develop staphatonsilis or something."

"That's not a thing," Eddie said with a scowl. He suddenly looked worriedly at the others. "It's not a thing, right?"

"I don't know, I'm not a doctor."

"Guys, is that thing? Is my wound gonna get infected? Am I gonna die?"

Richie exchanged a look with Bev. "No, Eds. You're not gonna die. Everything is going to be fine. We were all together, and nothing bad happened. Nothing bad *is* going to happen. Not anymore. We're free."

Notes for the Chapter:

I hope you enjoyed! As I was writing this, it definitely didn't go in the direction I expected to, but I feel like this works out better, with the timing and everything. Let me know what you think!

Next up: what happens after the movie ends, now that things didn't turn out exactly as was expected by fate.